

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 FREETO 00715 221407Z

46

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OC-06 CCO-00 AID-20 EB-11 COME-00 FEA-02

FPC-01 DODE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 DRC-01

/071 W

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P 221335Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9474

UNCLAS FREETOWN 0715

FOR AF/W

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BGEN, US, SL

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY ELECTRICAL GENERATING EQUIPMENT

1. MINISTER OF WORKS BUCK HAS ASKED FOR ASSISTANCE FROM THE USG IN OBTAINING TEMPORARY USE OF ELECTRICAL GENERATING EQUIPMENT FOR THE FREETOWN AREA TO ALLEVIATE THE PRESENT POWER SHORTAGE. THE EQUIPMENT WOULD BE REQUIRED FOR UP TO ONE YEAR.

2. FOR THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS MOST SECTIONS OF FREETOWN HAVE BEEN WITHOUT ELECTRICITY FOR AN AVERAGE OF 12 TO 14 HOURS PER DAY. ONLY ONE OF THE THREE AVAILABLE 6.5 MEGAWATT GENERATORS IS PRESENTLY IN OPERATION. THE OTHER TWO ARE BROKEN DOWN. ONE WITH A BURNED OUT ROTOR MAY BE IN OPERATION IN THREE WEEKS TO ONE MONTH BUT THE SECOND WITH A CRACKED BLOCK MAY REQUIRE SIX TO TEN MONTHS BEFORE IT CAN BE RESTORED TO NORMAL SERVICE. SHOULD THE LONE GENERATOR PRESENTLY OPERATING FAIL, AND IT HAS NOT HAD NORMAL MAINTENANCE FOR TOO LONG BECAUSE OF THIS EMERGENCY, FREETOWN WILL NOT ONLY BE WITHOUT ELECTRICITY, BUT WATER SUPPLIES TO MUCH OF THE CITY WILL BE CUT OFF AND THERE WILL BE NO PETROLEUM PRODUCTS AS THE REFINERY WILL CEASE TO OPERATE.

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PAGE 02 FREETO 00715 221407Z

HOPEFULLY NONE OF THIS WILL HAPPEN BUT THE POSSIBILITY

IS TOO GREAT FOR COMFORT.

3. I RECALL THAT SHIPBOARD AND RAIL MOUNTED EMERGENCY GENERATING EQUIPMENT ONCE WAS AVAILABLE FOR DISASTER RELIEF SITUATIONS. IF PRESENTLY AVAILABLE, THE GOVERNMENT ELECTRICITY CORPORATION NEEDS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE 10 MEGAWATTS OF POWER, PREFERABLY IN 5 MEGAWATT UNITS. LOCAL SYSTEM IS 11,000 KVA CAPACITY, 220-230 VOLTS, 50 CYCLE. PRESUMABLY 60 CYCLE EQUIPMENT COULD BE USED IN THIS EMERGENCY. I OFFERED THE GOSL NO ENCOURAGEMENT AND POINTED OUT THAT IF SUCH EQUIPMENT WERE AVAILABLE ON A TEMPORARY BASIS IT WOULD BE MOST EXPENSIVE. HOPES ON THEIR PART TO THE CONTRARY, I HAVE TAKEN THE LINE THAT THE ELECTRICITY CORPORATION AS A COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISE MUST EXPECT TO PAY FOR ANY GENERATING EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE.

4. RECOMMENDATION: ALL FREETOWN, INCLUDING THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY, COULD BE PLACED IN AN UNHAPPY, DANGEROUS (FROM THE HEALTH STANDPOINT) SITUATION IF THE PRESENT LONE GENERATOR FAILS. I STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT WE ATTEMPT TO PROVIDE EVERY PRACTICABLE ASSISTANCE IF THE EQUIPMENT REQUESTED IS AVAILABLE.

5. PRIORITY ACTION WOULD BE APPRECIATED.  
OLSON

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